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CHARLIE BAKER
GOVERNOR

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Baker-Polito Administration Expands Innovative Economic Prosperity Programming to Four Communities

Four housing authorities to receive \$389,000 in planning grants to implement Worcester-pioneered economic prosperity programming

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WORCESTER, MA – Today, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito announced a total of \$389,000 in planning and predevelopment grants for Housing Authorities in Chelsea, Gloucester, New Bedford and Taunton to pursue implementation of Worcester Housing Authority-pioneered 'A Better Life' programming. The program catalyzes economic independence and self-sufficiency by providing families and residents access to support services, educational opportunity and employment, while encouraging debt reduction and home ownership.

"Our administration is committed to pursuing community programming that works, and allowing others to learn from and build on its success," said **Governor Charlie Baker**. "Worcester's 'A Better Life' program is providing families guidance and access to the services and employment or educational opportunities that allow them to move towards long-term economic independence. We look forward to seeing others implement the program for their families and communities."

A Better Life (ABL) at the Worcester Housing Authority pairs participating families and residents with a Family Life Coach to conduct a comprehensive assessment of residents' needs and helps to create a collaborative "family development plan." This plan helps families map out short and long-term goals in focus areas of employment, financial literacy and education. Participants continue to receive support to discuss progress and accomplishments, and are given access to services through partner providers. Additionally, Worcester Housing Authority employs a full-time employment manager, who works with regional employers to help match participants to job opportunities.

Lt. Governor Polito joined Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay, Worcester Housing Authority Executive Director Alex Corrales and local officials in Worcester for the announcement.

"I am thrilled to announce the expansion of A Better Life, and I want to congratulate the Worcester Housing Authority on creating a program that profoundly benefits the lives of residents and families," said **Lt. Governor Polito**. "These awards will give more housing authorities the resources to create their own programming that will support families on the road to economic self-sufficiency and improve access to educational, financial and employment opportunities."

"Our public housing authorities provide critical housing in the Commonwealth, and affect the lives of thousands of families and residents," said **Chrystal Kornegay, Housing and Community Development Undersecretary**. "A Better Life leverages those existing touch points, and provides profoundly effective services to residents, and we are proud to partner with housing authorities to test its effectiveness at other sites."

Since the program was implemented in 2015, over 200 residents have taken part in ABL. A Better Life has supported families and residents in pursuing significant accomplishments in employment, education and financial success. Employment among participants has increased by 62 percent, and they have seen an overall increase of gross annual income by 76 percent. Worcester's participants have completed a collective 106 educational programs: 57 certifications, 12 associate degrees and five bachelor degrees. Additionally, ABL participants have reduced their overall debt by 30 percent, and those who have graduated the program have seen an even more significant reduction, at 75 percent.

"The Worcester Housing Authority is thrilled to see the ABL program expanded to these four communities," said **Alex Corrales, Executive Director of the Worcester Housing Authority**. "I applaud Lt. Governor Polito for her support of ABL from day one and her commitment to see it across the Commonwealth."

These grants will give the four housing authorities resources to design, plan, and prepare to implement the ABL program. Housing authorities will create strategies to capture program performance, an implementation timeline and recruit service provider partners to offer critical support services to residents.

This expansion reflects the Baker-Polito Administration's commitment to helping families and residents achieve economic prosperity across the Commonwealth. The Department of Housing and Community Development works closely with municipalities, local housing authorities and partner agencies to catalyze economic mobility for families and individuals. The administration is pursuing this goal through better coordination with stakeholders, expanding programs with a proven track record such as ABL, and creating new programs to foster economic prosperity.

